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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-2215**

June 25, 2007

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Mr. James Delany  
Commissioner, Big Ten Conference  
1500 West Higgins Road  
Park Ridge, Illinois 60068-6300

Dear Commissioner Delany:

In recent weeks, I have been approached by numerous constituents, all of whom share the same complaint. They are concerned about the local availability of University of Michigan football games since none of the Michigan cable systems carry the Big Ten Network (BTN). While I understand the motivation on the part of the Big Ten Conference and its member schools to create a new all-Big Ten cable channel, I am increasingly concerned about the migration of previously free, over the air content to a pay television tier.

Although I have no opinion on the business decisions of the Big Ten Conference, I would like answers to the following questions which I believe fans of Big Ten football and basketball have the right to know:

- 1) What is the current status of negotiations with cable systems in the Big Ten home markets?
- 2) Which cable systems is BTN currently negotiating with? Do you expect to favorably conclude those negotiations before kickoff of the college football season?
- 3) *The Sports Business Journal* recently reported that the Big Ten is asking for a rate of \$1.10 per household from cable systems for its content. I understand that this would make the BTN the third most expensive cable channel. How did BTN arrive at that rate?
- 4) Last year, all thirteen of the University of Michigan's football games were available on either free, over-the-air broadcast or on cable channels generally available to all cable subscribers. How many games in the 2007 schedule will be available either over-the-air or on basic cable?
- 5) How many games will be available over-the-air or on basic cable for the other ten teams of the conference? I would appreciate a listing for each school.
- 6) According to *The New York Times*, BTN will gross \$237 million for the member schools. How will that revenue be allotted? Will any be used for academic programs? For financial aid for non-athletes? For academic research?


With the exception of Northwestern University, all of the Big Ten Conference schools are public institutions, funded largely by the taxpayers of the states where they are located. Taxpayers have funded the stadiums where the games are played; the buses and planes that transport the players; the salaries of the coaches and trainers; and the scholarships of the athletes.

The free broadcasts of football and basketball games might not make the most money for the conference, but they enable the taxpayer the ability to enjoy what their money has provided. College sports provide a touchstone, not only for a school or alumni group, but also for an entire state and have become, over the years, a public good and part of our common culture.

I appreciate your answers to my questions and look forward to receiving them. I am sure Wolverine and Buckeye fans alike will appreciate your candor.

With every good wish,

Sincerely,



John D. Dingell  
Member of Congress